WA-WAN SERIES OF AMERICAN COMPOSITIONS

TWO SOUTH AMERICAN GYPSY SONGS

WITH VIOLIN OBBLIGATO

LA MONTONERA

AND

LA ZAMBULIDORA

BY

HENRY F. GILBERT

VOLUME V [SPRING QUARTER—PART I] No. 35

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INTRODUCTION

ON Saturday, March tenth, 1906, the New Music Society of America, which is not the American Music Society, gave its first concert, at Carnegie Hall in New York. The program was as follows: Suite No. 2 ("Indian") in E Minor, Op. 48, Edward MacDowell; "Salammbo's Invocation to Tänith," Dramatic Scene for Soprano and Orchestra, Henry F. Gilbert; Concerto for piano, No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 23, Edward MacDowell; and "Overture Joyeuse," Arthur Shepherd. The soloists were Miss Elise Stevens and Miss Ruth Lynda Deyo.

The New Music Society of America was organized and incorporated in New York, late in 1905. It aims "to bring to light the best music in the larger instrumental forms that has been or is now being written by American composers, and to make it known by actual public performance;" and through this "to create conditions favorable to the development of a vigorous musical art" in America. The society is not an organization of composers alone, but includes among its members critics (for there are at least two who have seen, or foreseen, far enough into the actualities and potentialities of American music to feel inspired with a friendly attitude toward the new movement), artists, publishers, authors, teachers, and men of affairs.

In view of the fact that The Wa-Wan Press has taken from the first a leading position in the development of Indian music; that Mr. Gilbert's aria "Salammbo's Invocation" was first brought out in The Wa-Wan Press, in 1902; and that Mr. Shepherd's only published works, his Prelude, Variations, and Mazurka, are issued by us, the present concert possesses especial significance for all who are following with interest our work for American music.

The question is, what is that significance? Since expressions of feeling regarding the concert have been so widely divergent, we can scarcely arrive at a conclusion without in some degree penetrating and evaluating these feelings. Those concerned we may divide into five obvious classes; composers, friends of composers, the public, critics, and seekers after the truth, in which latter class, for hypothetical purposes, we will consider ourselves.

The American composer's difficulty in gaining an orchestral hearing is both axiomatic and trite. The worm will turn, and it is sheer affectation for the critics, who should be better posted on the workings of art-movements, to witness that turning with resentment. A movement of this kind is not based upon proved, but upon unproved and experimental work, the reason for the movement being inevitable impulse, rather than acknowledged merit. The impulse, and the need for its development, will compel such action as the present, before that degree of quality can possibly arise, which is born of longer experience and momentum of effort. The influence of such an action upon orchestral composition is far reaching and incalculable, spurring the American composer to new and better accomplishment by giving him the first hope which he has ever had of a turning of the orchestral tide in his favor. Critics will say that Paine, Chadwick, Parker, MacDowell, have succeeded in getting their scores performed. They have had courtesy performances here or there, yes; but how much of a part do these works play in American musical life? Where are they ever performed? Because of this condition of affairs, the new society has included in its plan

the giving of standard American orchestral works. So far as I can discover, and I have been in a position to observe the matter closely, I have not perceived that the composers in touch with the new organization are dominated or blinded by any youthful idea that they are now in a position to utterly vanquish the critics. Their position is one of determination to get adequate rehearsals and hearings of their best efforts, to profit in orchestral knowledge, and to gain a medium of communication between themselves and the American people. They are as ready to learn that their experiments are failures, as that they are successes, and their bouyant nonchalance as to the immediate result bears testimony to their confidence in their own ability to improve with experience. Their attitude, on the whole, seems to have been sane, unpretentious, and determined, and this estimate is borne out by the absence of any abnormal exultation or discouragement on their part, since the concert. Conversation with the younger, the experimental and more distinctively modern generation of composers reveals that their passion, almost without exception, is for growth, for development in themselves. It is orchestral opportunity that they wish and need, and have finally taken steps to obtain. From this standpoint,—the absolute need of room for growth,—the mere giving of the first concert, under the existing circumstances, constituted in itself a success. Only after a considerable series of such concerts will it be possible to form an idea of their final artistic justification. We stand in the greatest need of this experiment today, as is demonstrated by the arousing of sufficient spirit to undertake it.

The position of the friends of the composers is not far removed from that of the composers themselves. Their concern in becoming members of the new society is that the composer may have the opportunity which he requires, and that they themselves may have the experience of hearing his works. While, on the one hand, their judgment may in some cases be biased by their friendship, on the other, their efforts are necessarily marked by a greater disinterestedness and generosity. As these friends, who make up the membership of the society, are constant patrons of the symphony concerts of New York, there is little reason to suppose that their taste and judgment is naive. In fact they constitute the most alert portion of one of the best trained orchestral audiences in America. And in fact, in spite of their necessarily energetic efforts to secure the support for these concerts, (for others are to follow), their attitude, artistically, has been that of conservatism combined with friendliness. Their greatest weakness lies perhaps in their lack of knowledge of musical history, which compels them to judge by their immediate feelings and by immediate comparisons, without the added light which, to a synthetic mind, musical history can throw upon musical evolution in the future. No one who has observed the spirit in which these friends of our American composers have lent their aid in the present undertaking, can feel that they are other than sane helpers in an ideal and experimental cause ; men perfectly aware of the possibility of failure, but like true path-hewers, restless, and eager to press forward.

While from the public we can, in a single concert, learn nothing of the artistic value of the works performed, we can at least gather a few facts having an interesting bearing upon the situation. While there are ardent music-lovers among box-holders and subscribers, it is to the upper galleries that we must go to find that portion of the public which attends a symphony concert exclusively because of a compelling love of music. Upon the occasion of this concert of American music, five hundred dollars were taken in at the door on the evening of the concert, and the upper galleries were well filled. The considerable drawing power of a concert of American compositions was thus demonstrated, concerning which much doubt had earlier been expressed. The audience took an evident pleasure in the concert throughout. While the hall was not crowded, it was apparent that the public was entirely ready for this experiment,

and interested in the outcome, a factor not to be disregarded merely because public approval is no indicator of artistic merit. The public, sane, pleasure-loving, and without fine discrimination, played its usual role.

In offering an interior view of the situation, we cannot, in the search for truth, omit a reference to the personal equation qualifying the professional critic's expression. In general, this expression took the form of a most justifiable praise of the MacDowell compositions, as well as an analysis of them, coupled with a disparagement of the society's organization and purpose, and a disposing of the Gilbert and Shepherd works as "unimportant," without giving them critical consideration. This not unexpected attitude requires comment, as it serves to show a certain quixotic and touchy self-consciousness and lack of frank good nature in the critical body, at least as regards this subject, which must be reckoned with in evaluating the critic's estimate of this concert. The word "unimportant" here, however, may possess two meanings, a positive and a relative; for the works in question might justifiably be said to be "unimportant" if we are considering only the greatest masterpieces; but again, as regards the growth of our young and undeveloped musical art in America,—and it was partly in this sense that the concert was given,—they might present elements of considerable importance. And since the present musical ferment in America undoubtedly marks a point of departure in this development, we may from now on expect many hints and indications of our musical art of the future, in the experimental works of our younger composers. And such works may be expected to be "unimportant," as regards their ultimate durability, in proportion as they break away from accepted models and styles, without bringing new ones to maturity. The critic, it is true, is galled beyond measure by much that he is obliged to listen to, and risks being charged with lack of sympathy in proportion as he is courageous to withhold praise where praise is expected and is not due. But aspiration in art is too rare among us not to be cherished, too deeply needed not to be met half way, in a friendly and generous spirit, even if artistic principle demand that criticism be severe.

In searching for the truth concerning the significance of this concert, we must come to the conclusion that our estimate must vary greatly according to the point of view from which we regard it. If we are thinking only of the final technical merit of the works presented, we will draw one conclusion; if of their spiritual quality, we will draw another; if, again, we consider this concert as a very fragmentary expression of an idea or cause which it will take years to express as a whole, then we will judge it in still another manner. And since the question is so largely one of point of view, we will do well to consider and cultivate that viewpoint which commands the situation not in one part alone, but in its entirety. It is well, undoubtedly, that we should have a high, well defined, and severe standard of criticism, and that we should apply it. But this is no reason why we should not at the same time hold a sympathetic, helpful, and constructive attitude toward sincere aspiration and effort.

In view of the fact that the MacDowell compositions have been heard before, though not enough, and in view of the immaturity of the other works on the program, this first concert of the New Music Society of America may fairly be considered as not of exceptional importance, as regards the bringing forward of new works. It is likely, however, that it has brought forward two names new to orchestral music, which will be much heard in connection with the development of American music. On the other hand as indicating that high degree of vitality which has finally brought into existence the first of a series of orchestral concerts of American compositions, a consummation which has been long and devoutly wished, this concert is of signal importance in the history of the cause in which it is given. No one will learn as much from this series of concerts as the American composer himself, and it is to be

remembered to his credit, that he goes to it rather as an object lesson to which he is entitled than as to a battle in which he shall slay the critics.

For a knowledge of the "Salammbo," we refer our readers to the aria itself, as published by The Wa-Wan Press, regretting only that it cannot convey an idea of Mr. Gilbert's rich and colorful instrumentation.

Mr. Shepherd's "Overture Joyeuse" is the composition which won the Paderewski prize last December. Its only defects seem to be those of youth. Brahms and Wagner are distinguishable — thus are the remote corners of the earth brought together — and the virile spirit exhibited at the outset is not maintained throughout. The interest, however, is kept up by many inventions of Mr. Shepherd's quick fancy. The tonal weight is thrown to the top of the orchestra, leaving the middle parts thinner, giving a peculiar effect of buoyancy not dissimilar to that which Coventry Patmore observes in the Greek column, thinnest just at the point where its upward force seems most required to meet the weight of the heavy entablature. It is a dangerous course, with the orchestra, but is perhaps capable of very significant development. If without opportunity for orchestral experience, as is the case, Mr. Shepherd can accomplish this overture, he will certainly gain rapidly with practical experience. With greater freedom from his models, and with the strengthened sustaining power of maturity, we may expect much from him in the larger forms.

The South American Gypsy Songs, which form the vocal part of our present issue, mark a departure in style from most of Mr. Gilbert's recent work, which has reflected with such keen musical sympathy the reviving thought and feeling of the ancient Celtic spirit. The Celt and the Romany have, perhaps, a spiritual kinship, in the peculiar intensity of their passion for forgetfulness of this world's tyranny and constraint, a passion which drives the Celt to the uttermost bounds of his own inward mystic nature, to a dominion of dreams, and the Romany to the ends of the earth: and, it might be added, the pirate to the sea. It is, therefore, not surprising to find the composer of the "Pirate Song" and the "Celtic Studies" now hard on the trail of the Gypsy, whose camp-fires he has found on the lonely heights of the Andes.

The New Orleans Miniatures, by Mr. John Beach, which constitute the instrumental part of this issue, are the product of a sojourn in the city of the famed Mardi Gras. Concerning certain of these Miniatures we will let Mr. Beach speak, or write, for himself. In a letter concerning these works he writes,—"You may be a little in doubt about No. 2, 'In an Ursuline Court.' Let me explain. If you go into an old New Orleans courtyard, you will see little but sky. The clouds seem to have more significance because of the frame. As I was watching them one day I thought of how I lay watching them on the banks of the sleepy Loing at Montigny last summer, and the song I thought of there, skygazing; (in B, afterwards in A flat). You will observe how this grows out of the cloud motive, or that from the tune. It should be well played to create the illusion. *Voila!* The fourth, Place d'Orleans, is a Sunday morning in the narrow passage beside the cathedral, as the bell theme will doubtless tell you. The Balcony Lyric is not a serenade, but a nocturnal reverie, a *chanson d'amour et des fleurs.* The Envoi is a fragment of it again to overcome the crudity of Mardi Gras."

ARTHUR FARWELL.

Newton Center, Massachusetts,
April, 1906.

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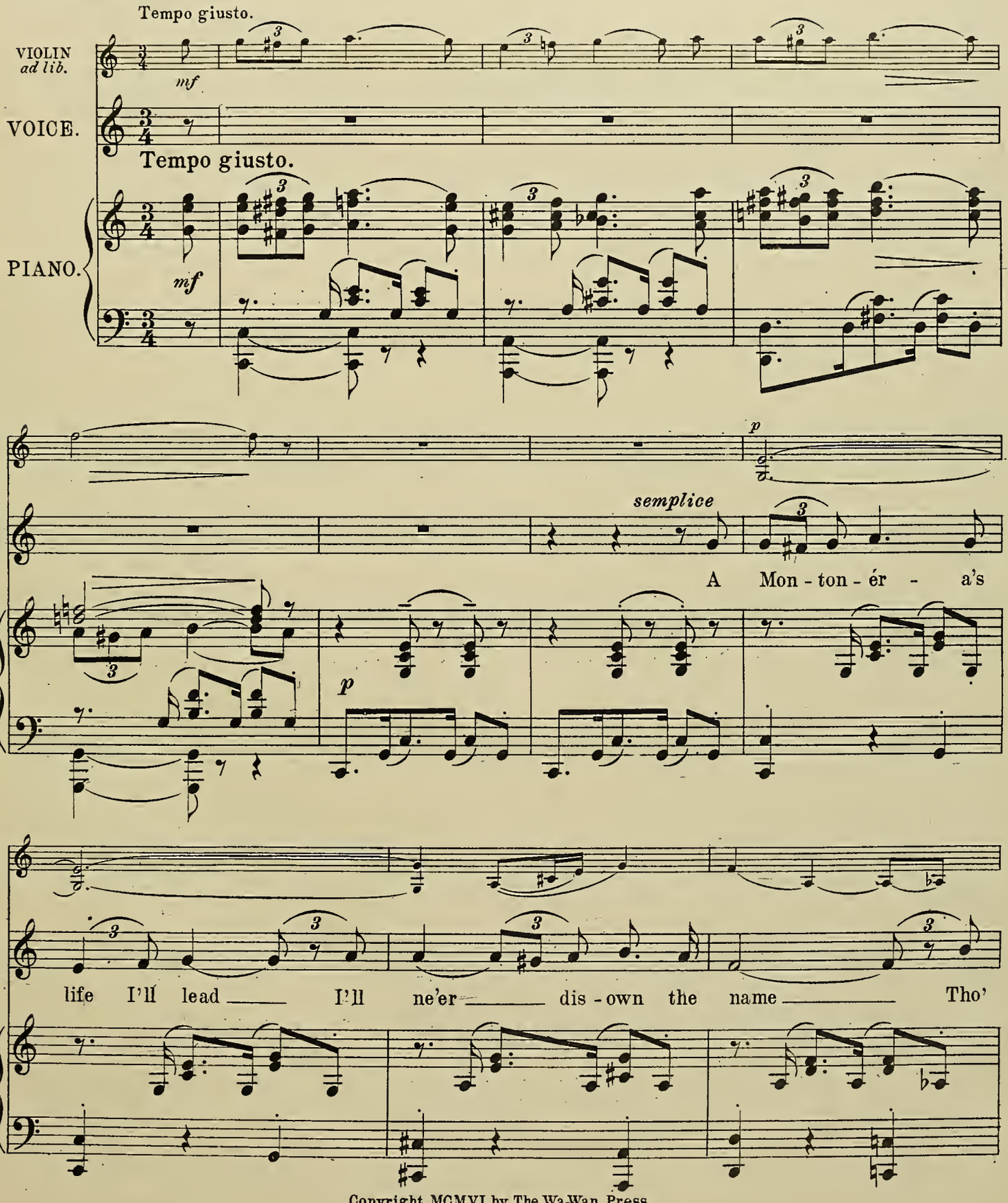
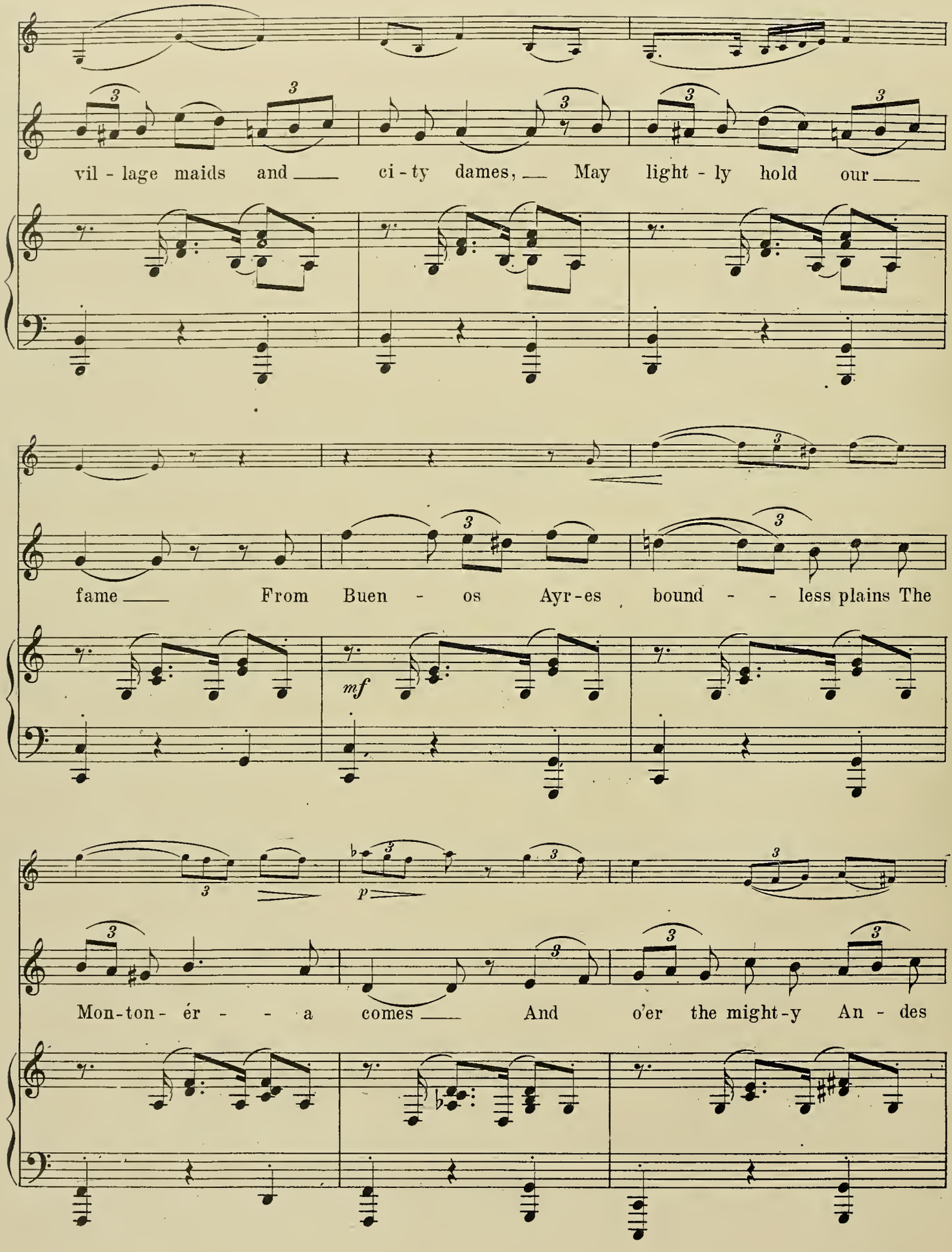
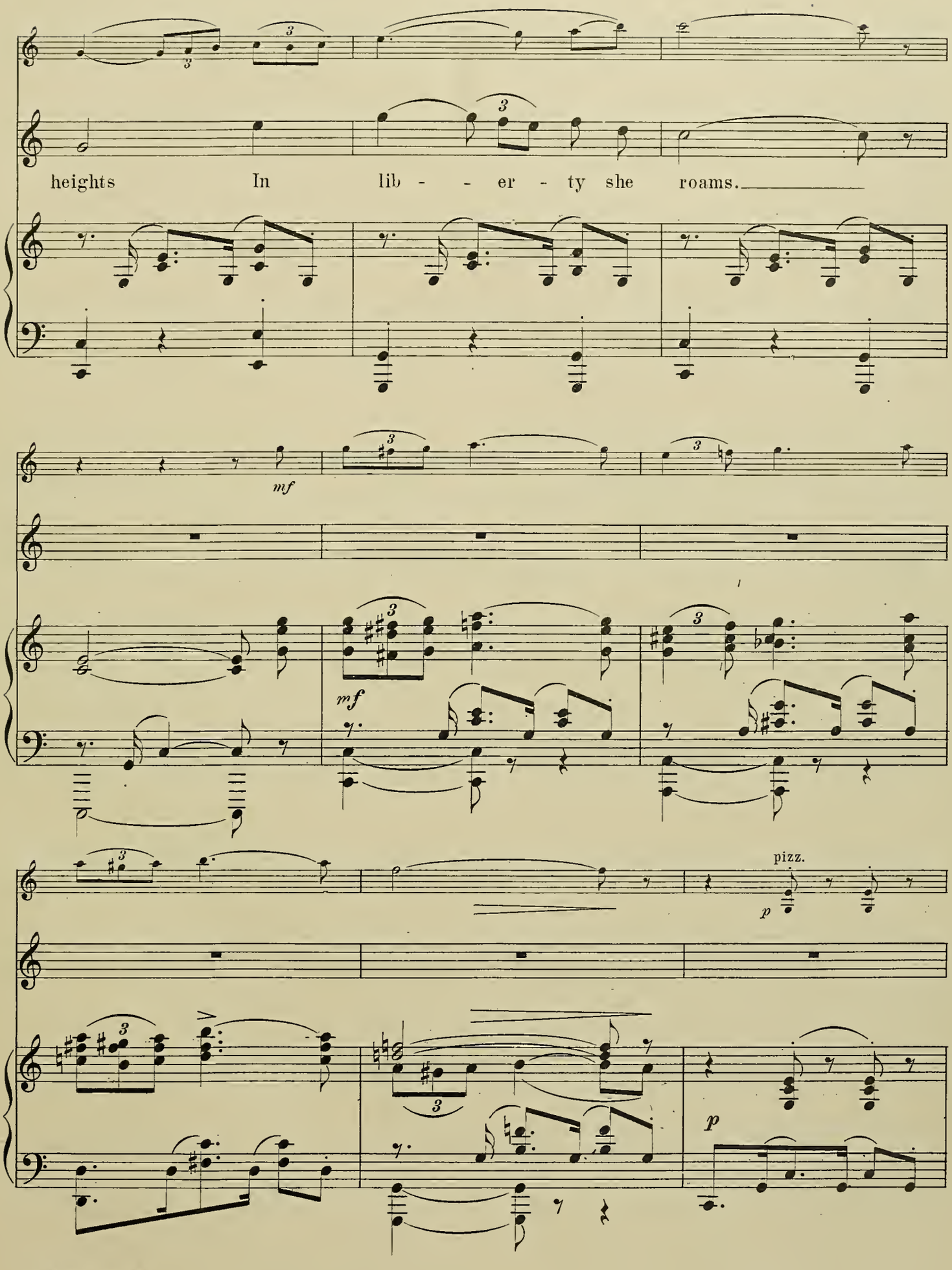
I.
La Montonéra.

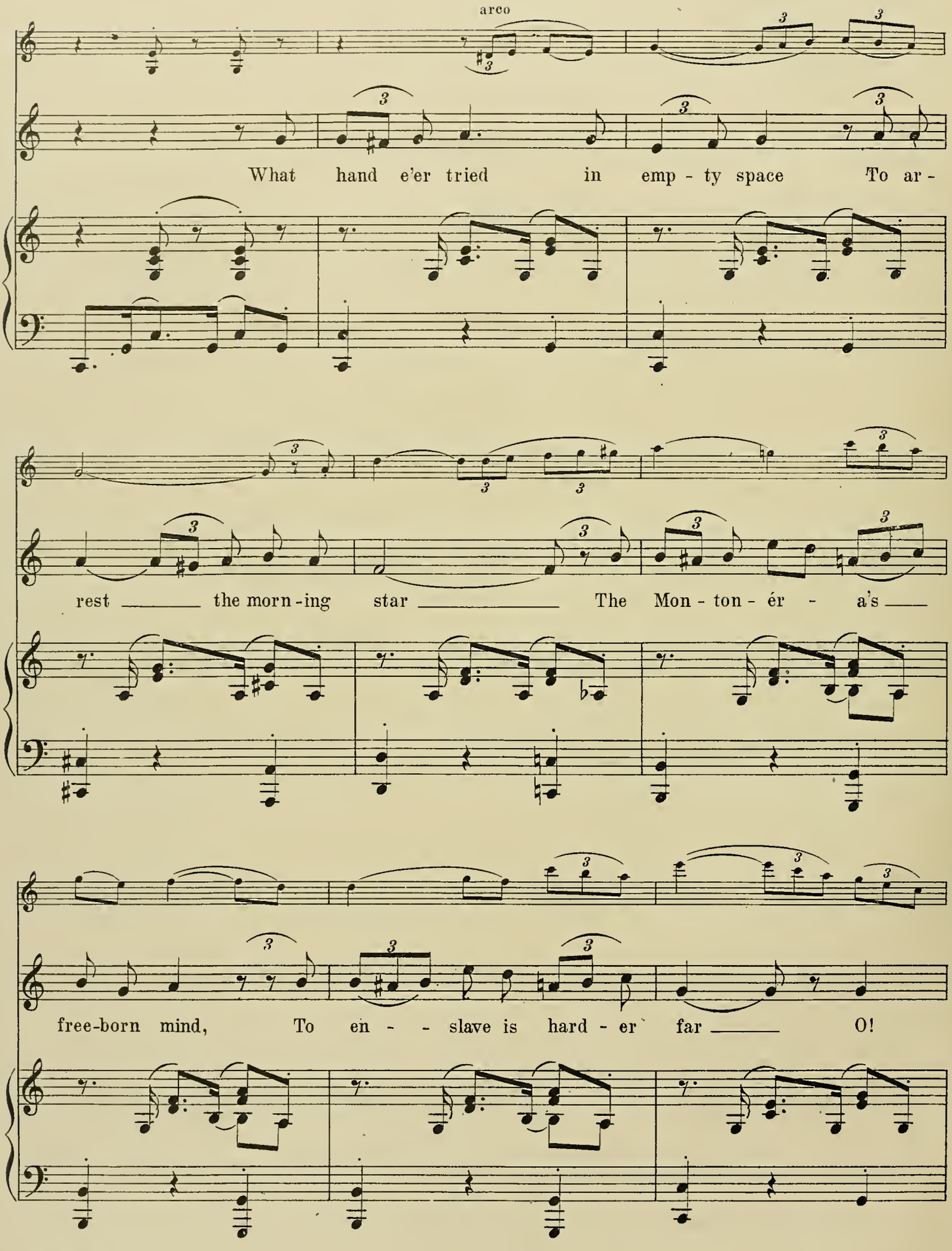
Words from
"Through Romany Songland"
by Laura A. Smith.

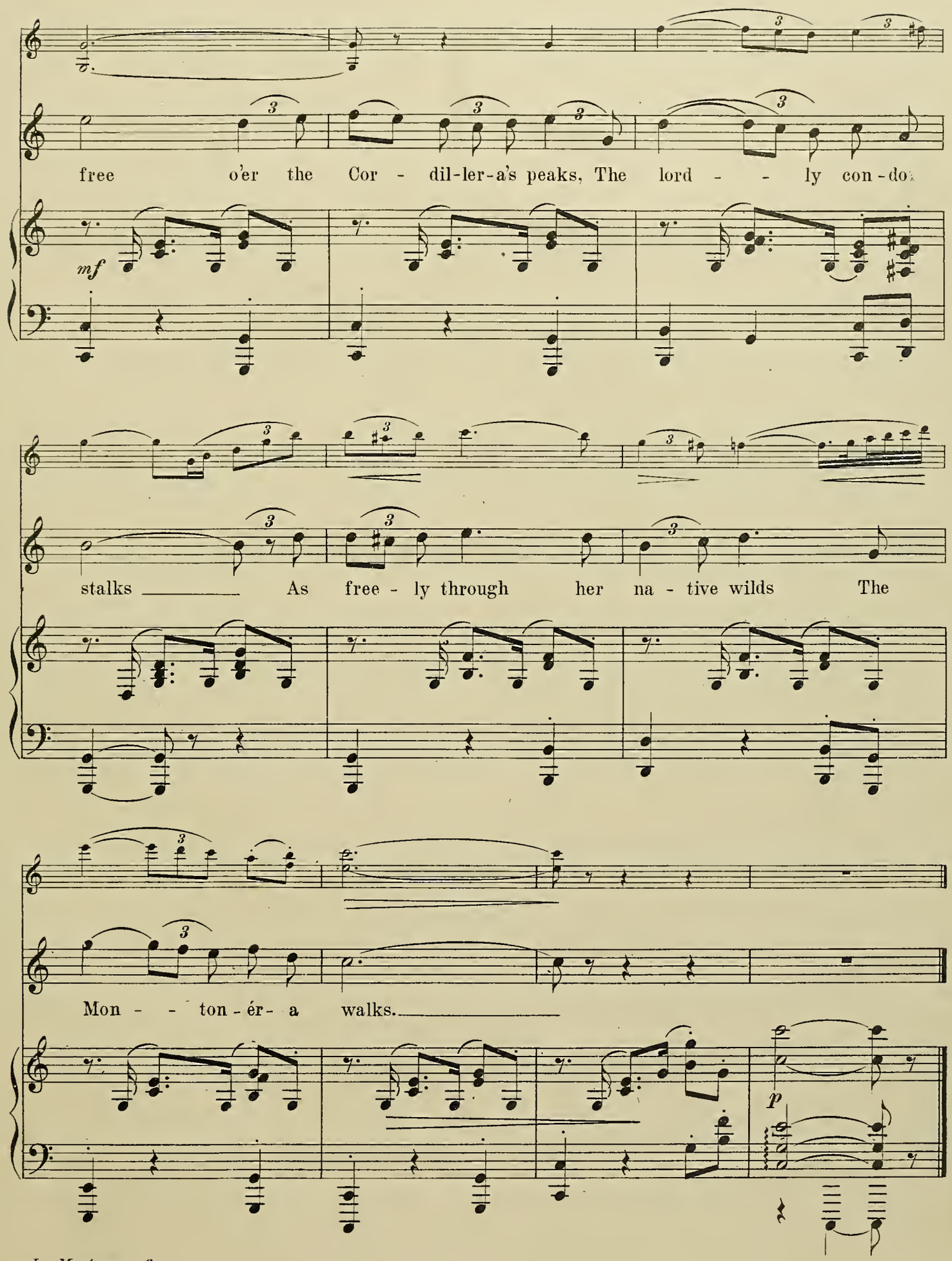
Music by
Henry F. Gilbert.




vil - lage maids and ci - ty dames, May light - ly hold our
fame From Buen - os Ayr-es bound - - less plains The
mf
Mon-ton- ér - - - a comes And o'er the might-y An - des
p


heights In lib - - er - ty she roams.
mf
mf
pizz.
p
p


arco
What hand e'er tried in emp - ty space To ar -
rest the morn-ing star The Mon - ton - ér - a's
free-born mind, To en - - slave is hard - er far O!

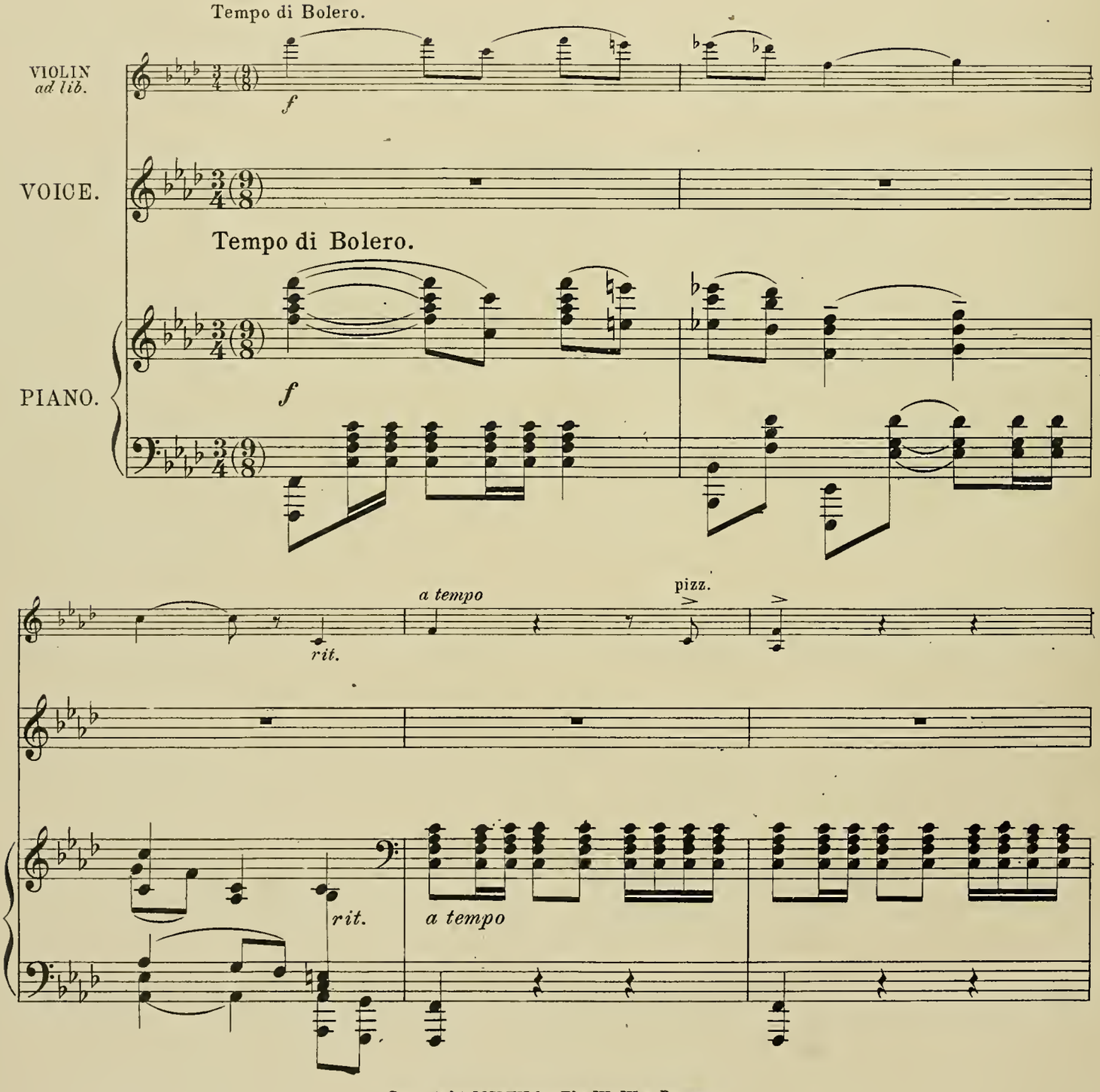

free o'er the Cor - dil-ler-a's peaks, The lord - - ly con-do
mf
stalks As free - ly through her na - tive wilds The
Mon - - ton-ér- a walks.
p

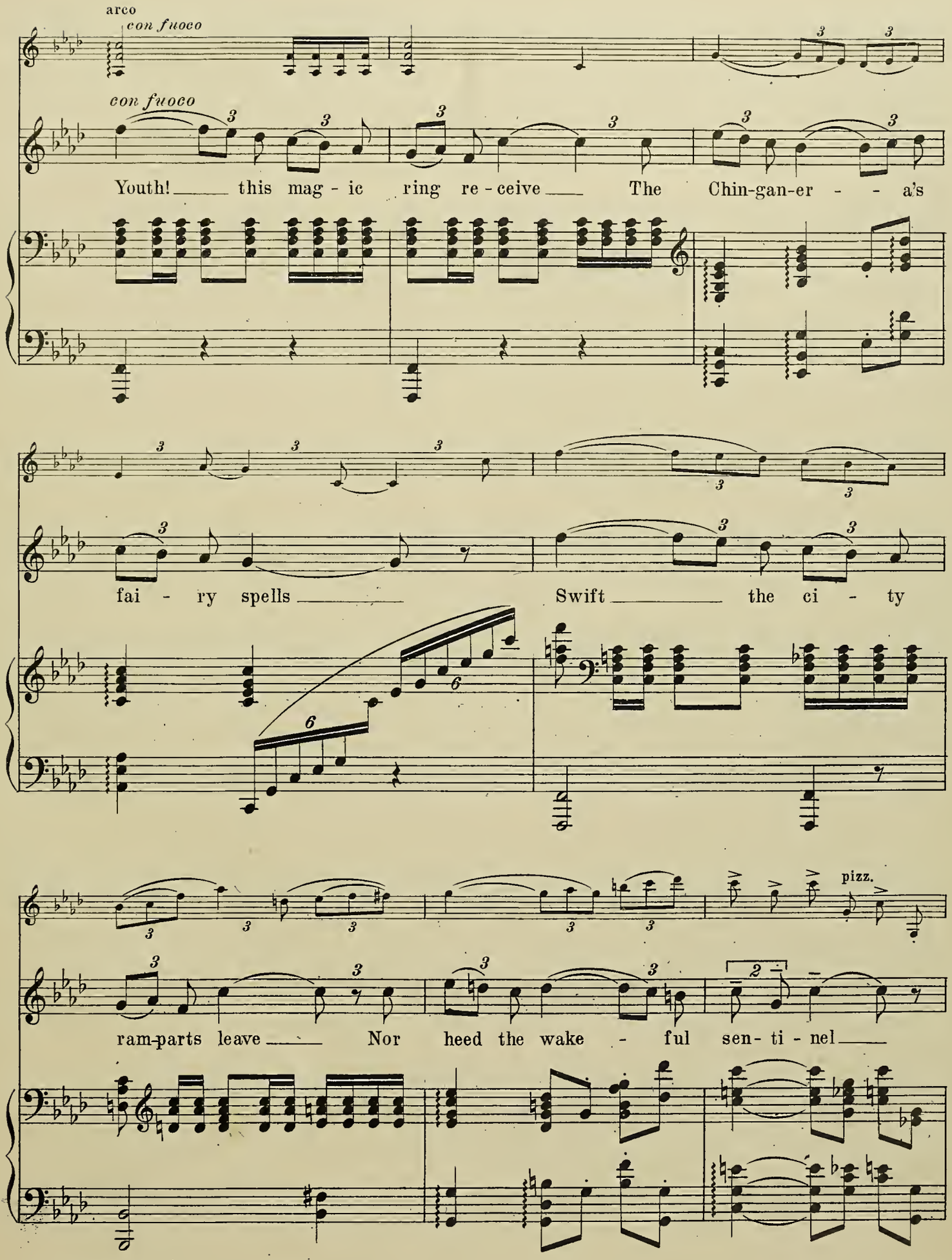
II.

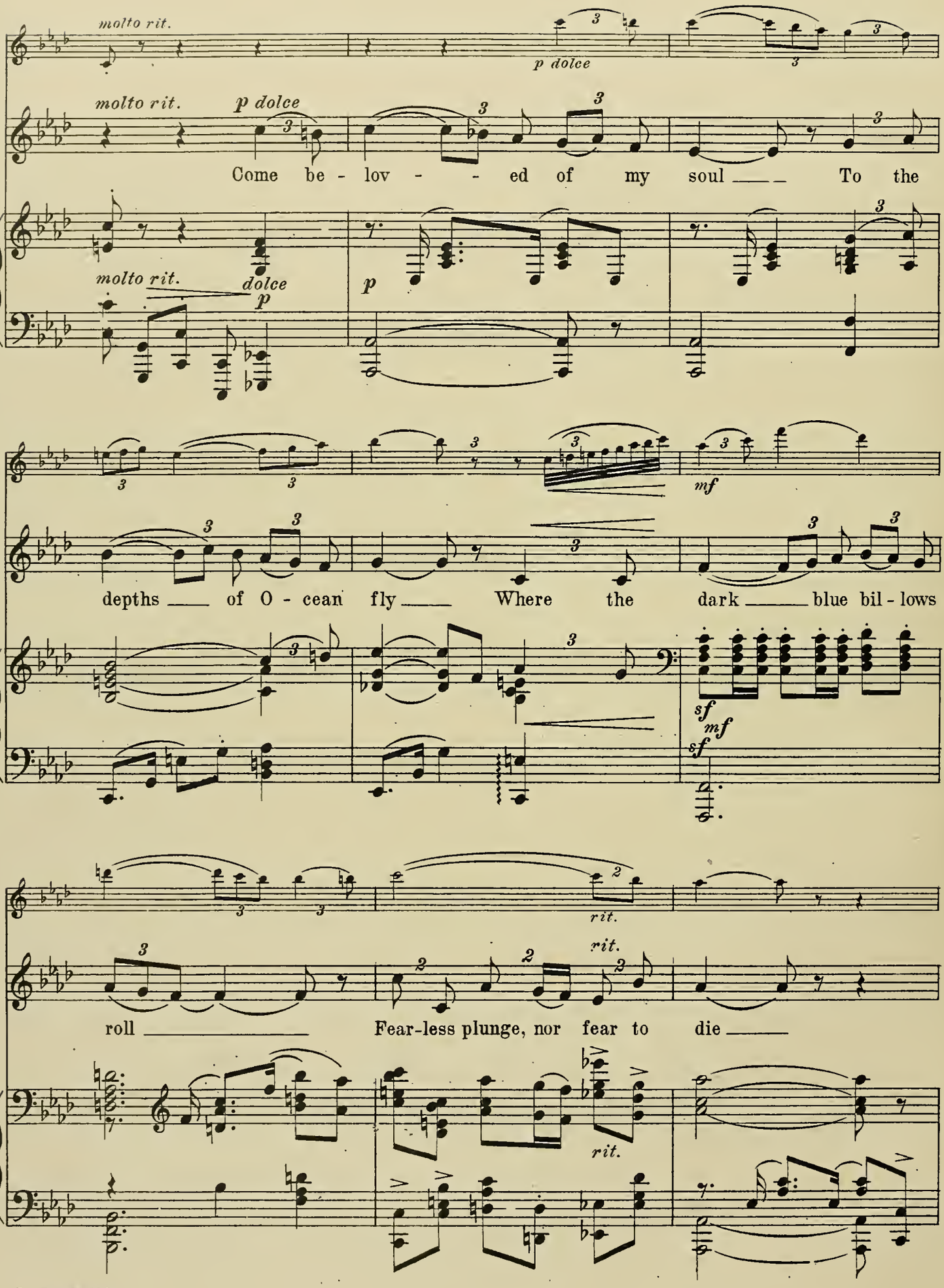
La Zambulidora.

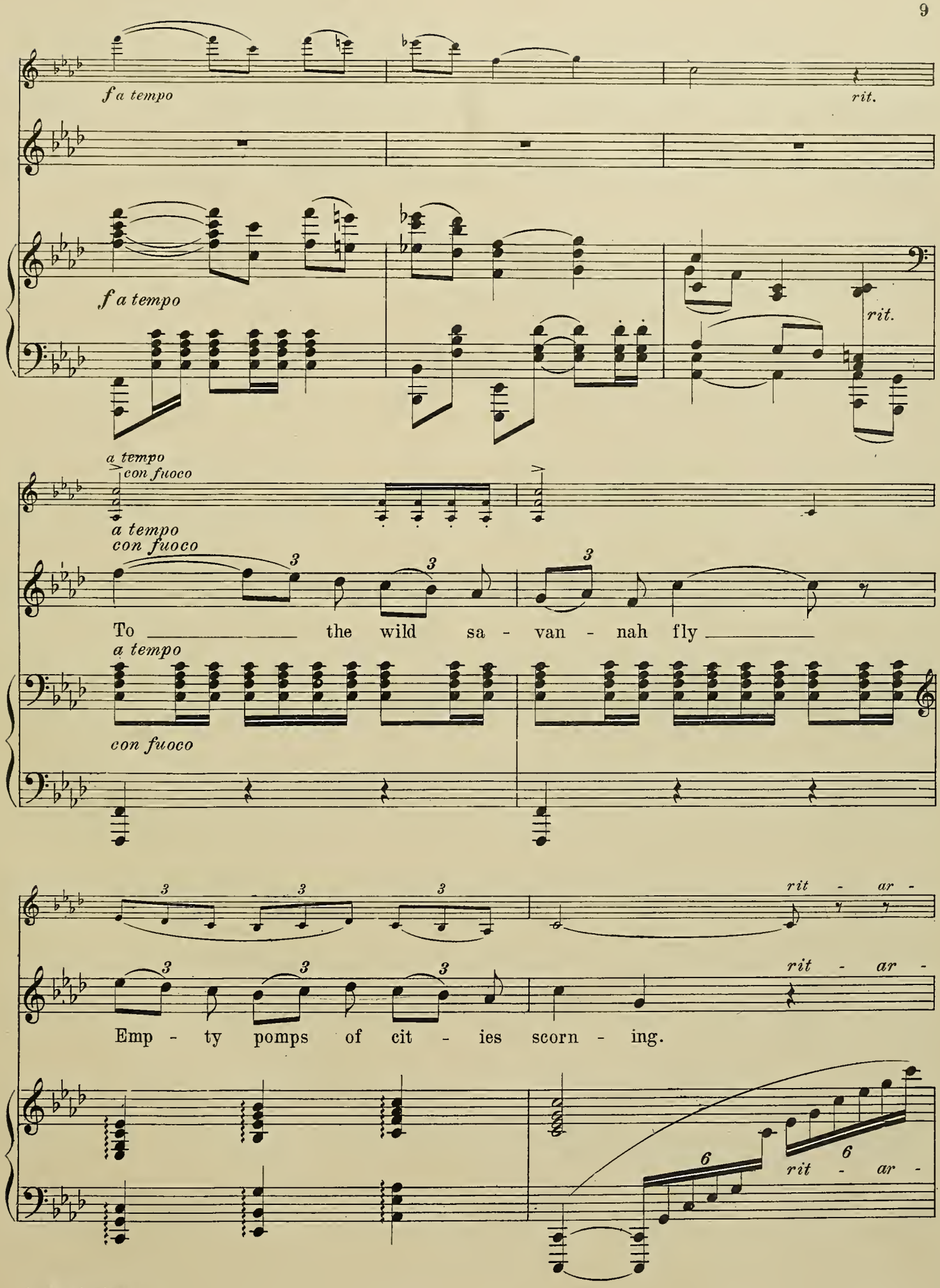
Words from
"Through Romany Songland"
by Laura A. Smith.

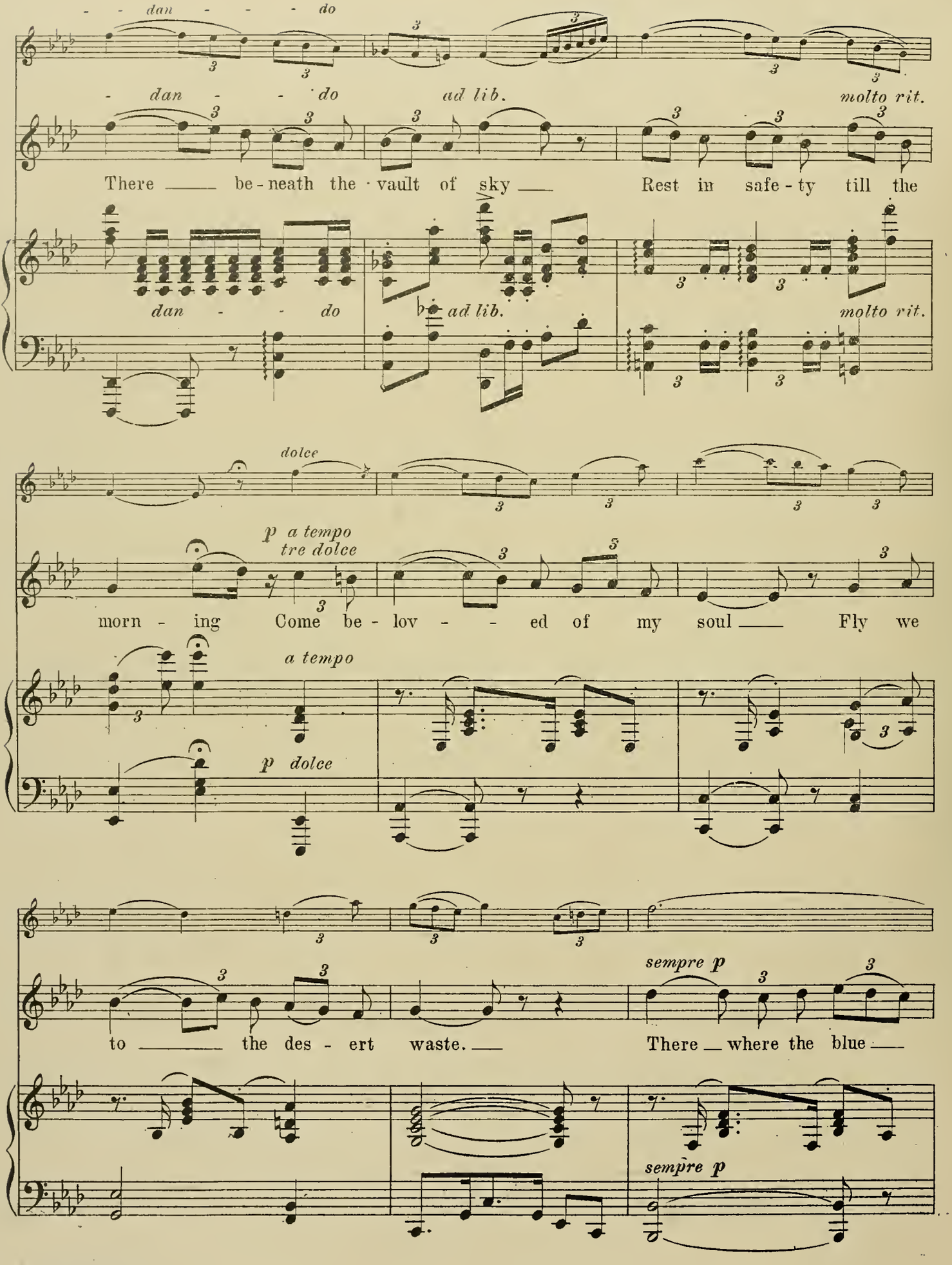
Music by
Henry F. Gilbert.

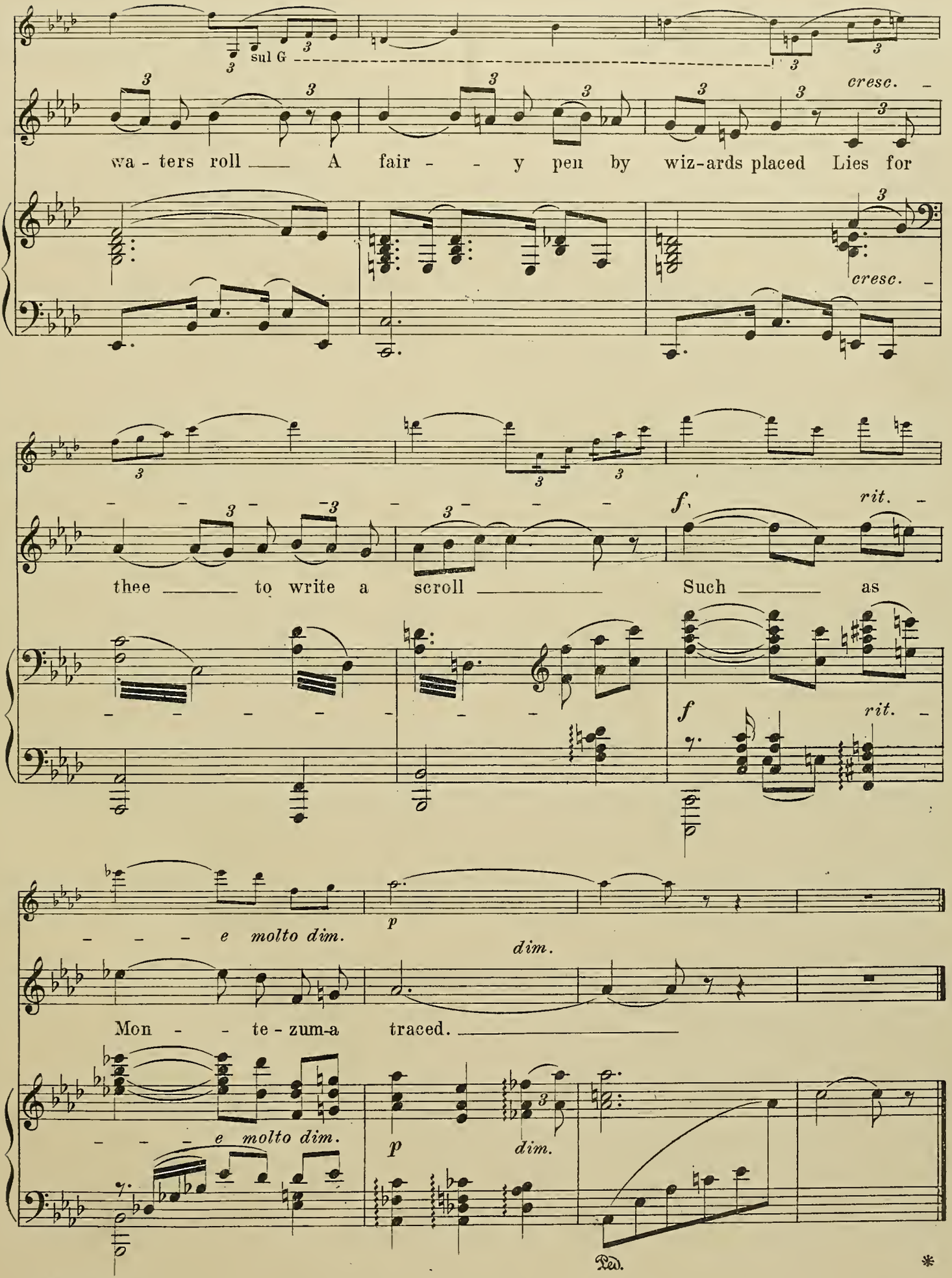



arco
con fuoco
con fuoco
Youth! this mag - ic ring re - ceive The Chin-gan-er - - a's
fai - ry spells Swift the ci - ty
pizz.
ram-parts leave Nor heed the wake - ful sen- ti - nel


molto rit.
p dolce
molto rit.
p dolce
Come be - lov - - ed of my soul — To the
molto rit.
dolce
p
p
mf
depths — of O - cean fly — Where the dark — blue bil - lows
sf
mf
sf
rit.
rit.
roll — Fear-less plunge, nor fear to die —
rit.


f a tempo
rit.
f a tempo
rit.
a tempo
con fuoco
a tempo
con fuoco
To the wild sa - van - nah fly
a tempo
con fuoco
rit - ar -
rit - ar -
Emp - ty pomps of cit - ies scorn - ing.
rit - ar -


- - dan - - - - do
- dan - - - do
ad lib.
molto rit.
There ___ be - neath the · vault of sky ___
Rest in safe - ty till the
dan - - - do
ad lib.
molto rit.
dolce
p a tempo
tre dolce
morn - ing Come be - lov - - - ed of my soul ___
Fly we
a tempo
p dolce
sempre p
to ___ the des - ert waste. ___
There ___ where the blue ___
sempre p


sul G
cresc.
wa - ters roll A fair - - y pen by wiz-ards placed Lies for
cresc.
thee to write a scroll Such as
f
rit.
e molto dim.
p
dim.
Mon - - te - zum-a traced.
e molto dim.
p
dim.
Ped.
*

THE WA-WAN PRESS

NEWTON CENTER
MASSACHUSETTS

THE OBJECT OF THE MOVEMENT

THE WA-WAN PRESS, at Newton Center, Massachusetts, is an enterprise organized and directly conducted by composers, in the interest of the best American composition. It aims to promote by publication and public hearings, the most progressive, characteristic, and serious works of American composers, known or unknown, and to present compositions based on the melodies of American folk-songs.

Many persons are already aware not only of the resource and promise, but of the increasing ripeness of the composer's art in this country. For these, and all who wish to enjoy the fruits of our undertaking as a whole, and who wish to add the unit of their personal force to the work of building up a musical art that shall represent the highest talents and ideals of American composers, our works are issued quarterly by subscription, to the amount of eighty to one hundred pages per year, at six dollars. This is a liberal reduction from sheet music prices. For artists, teachers, and others who may wish to procure single copies of our compositions, they are also obtainable in this form, at sheet music prices.

We invite correspondence from all who are interested, and will send prospectus and catalogue upon application. We will also be glad to send subscription issues or single copies of our compositions on approval.

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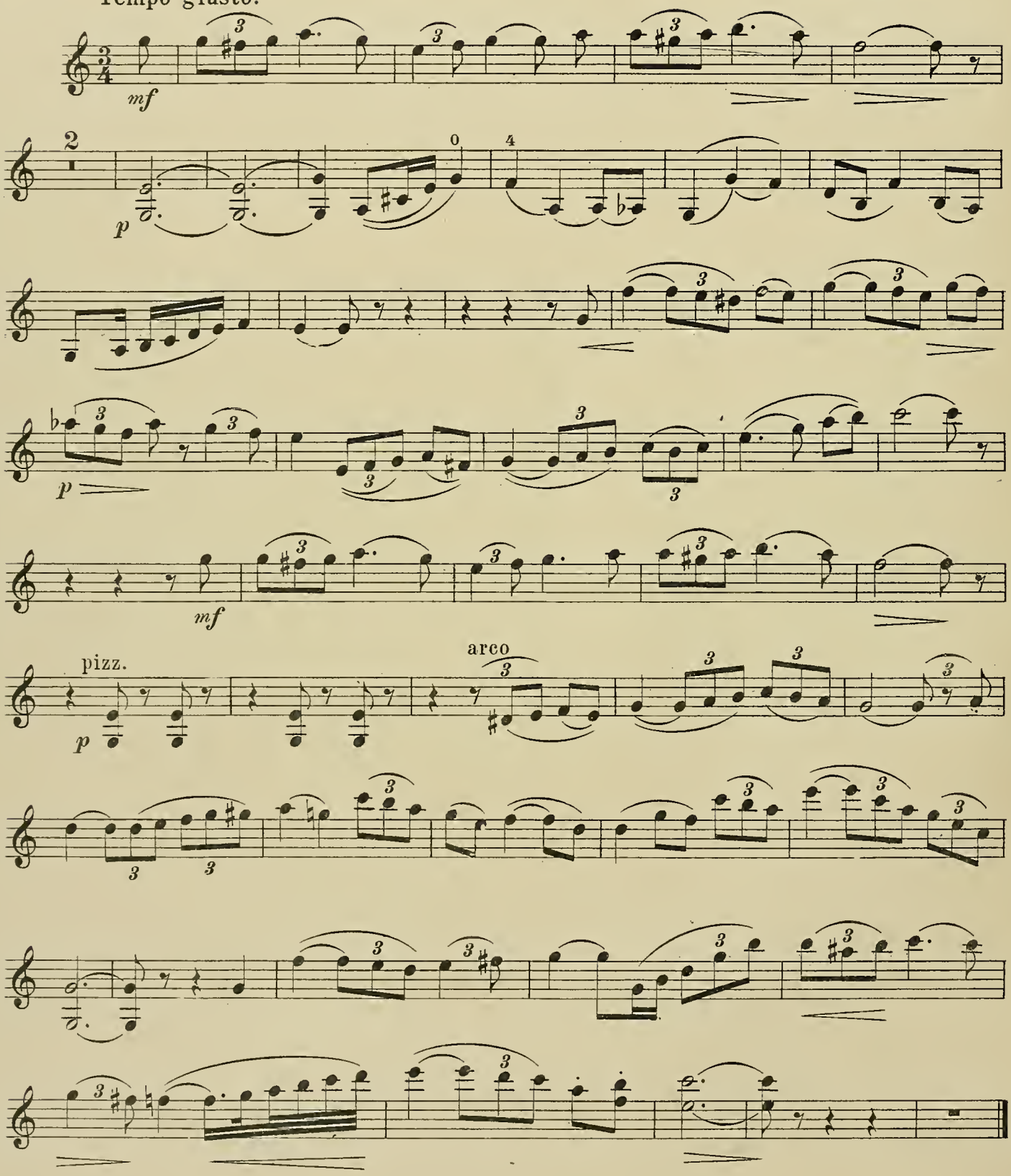
I.
La Montonéra.

Violin.

Henry F. Gilbert.

Tempo giusto.



II.
La Zambulidora.

Violin.

Tempo di Bolero.

Henry F. Gilbert.